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ABSTRACT

Four steps are critical in developing cultural competence in students: (1) a supportive training program; (2) a significant number or "critical mass" of culturally diverse students and allies; (3) opportunities to learn about diversity; and (4) development of racial identity. An appreciation of cultural diversity lies at the heart of any counseling psychology curriculum. To engender an appreciation and understanding of cultural differences, counseling programs must incorporate diversity training into their curricula, while increasing the diversity of the program's students and staff. In addition, faculty members must also strive to support students who are trying to increase their understanding of cultural diversity by apprising them of classes, conferences, practica, assistantships and research that deals with diversity. Another important element of helping students develop interventions to meet the challenge of cultural diversity is faculty/student mentoring programs. Students who pursue a greater awareness of cultural diversity outside the classroom appear to be at more advanced stages of racial identity development. Empirical research should be conducted, however, to gather evidence on such a claim. (KW)

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Culturally Competent Counseling Psychology Students: Developmental Perspectives

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Culturally Competent Counseling Psychology Students: Developmental Perspectives

Abstract

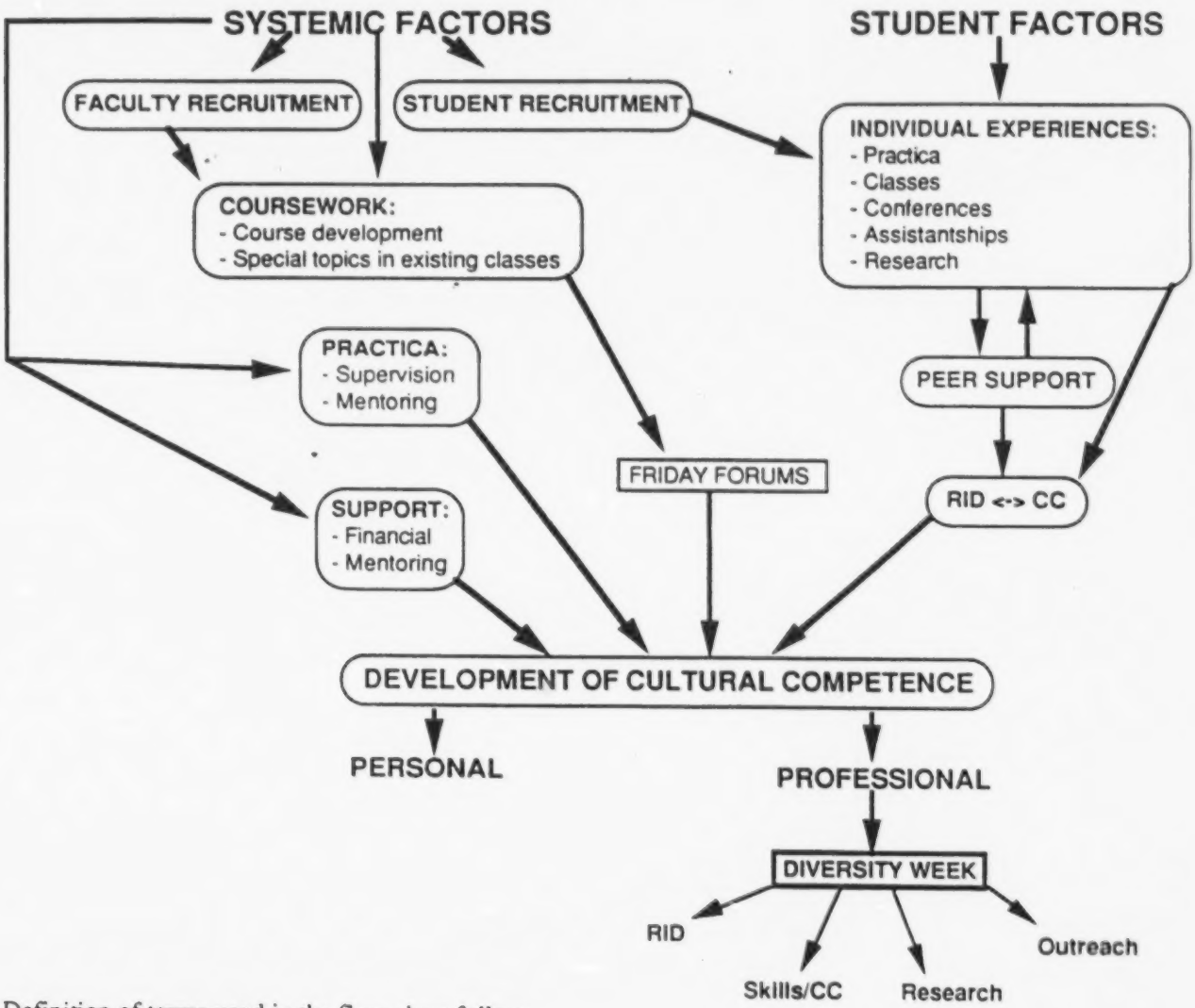
This paper presents student perspectives on becoming culturally competent (CC). We believe the following are critical in developing CC in students: 1) a supportive training program, 2) a "critical mass" of culturally diverse students and allies, 3) opportunities to learn about diversity, and 4) development of racial identity. Anecdotal examples illustrate the development of CC among graduate students.

The appreciation of diversity has been called a core value of Counseling Psychology (Howard, 1992). It has been proposed that programs incorporate diversity training into their curricula as well as increasing the diversity of students and staff (LaFromboise & Foster, 1992). Culturally competent individuals will be key agents in developing and implementing interventions to meet this challenge.

The authors are students in a counseling psychology training program where issues of diversity had been addressed by recruiting diverse faculty and students, and by discussion in classes and forums. Students took initiative to further increase their awareness and skills by attending classes and conferences which focused specifically on topics of diversity, eventually becoming able to articulate a developmental perspective toward their needs to learn about diversity. These students tended to be at more advanced stages of racial identity development (RID, Helms, 1993). Faculty supported them by apprising them of classes, conferences, and mentoring opportunities. Development of CC led the authors to become proactive promoters of diversity awareness in their department. They founded a yearly conference designed to enhance CC in individuals at all levels of development.

In the authors' counseling psychology training program, issues of diversity were addressed by recruiting diverse faculty and students, and by discussion in classes and forums. Students also took initiative to increase their knowledge on their own time. They were supported by faculty who made them aware of classes, conferences, funding and mentoring opportunities. The development of CC led the authors to become proactive in promoting diversity in their department. They founded a conference that provides opportunities for individuals at all levels of competence to enhance their awareness and skills. The diversity program required a "critical mass" of participants - that "critical mass" could not have existed without the recruitment efforts of the faculty, as well as the enhancement of the identity development / cultural competence of the individuals who developed it.

We have illustrated our perception of the factors that enhance the development of cultural competence in the chart below:



Definition of terms used in the flow chart follow.

DEFINITIONS

SYSTEMIC FACTORS

Our description of systemic factors reflects a student perspective of activities and in no way represents departmental policies or efforts in their entirety.

FACULTY RECRUITMENT: Students were aware of ongoing efforts by faculty to recruit a faculty member who could address multicultural issues. This included inviting students to participate in the interview process. The department was successful in recruiting such a faculty member.

STUDENT RECRUITMENT: the department made special efforts to recruit students who were people of color. These students are connected with resources in the department and at the university for support.

COURSEWORK

Special topics in classes: Existing classes have generally devoted sections or sessions to issues such as working with special populations or the application of assessment instruments in special populations such as African Americans/Blacks, Gay, Lesbian or Bisexual individuals, women and people with disabilities.

Course development: The department continues to develop a separate course addressing multicultural issues.

PRACTICA: Among the practica there exist opportunities to work with clients from diverse backgrounds as well as be supervised by people of diverse backgrounds who also are committed to and active in the area of multiculturalism.

SUPPORT: Financial support allowed students to attend multicultural conferences and facilitated the diversity program developed by them. Mentoring took the form of actual mentoring relationships as well as faculty informing the students about activities, classes and funding opportunities.

STUDENT FACTORS

INDIVIDUAL EXPERIENCES

Practica: A limited number of experiences with diverse individuals as clients is available through work at practica in community agencies. Opportunities to develop mentoring relationships are also available through practica.

Conferences: Students have attended and informed each other about multicultural conferences as well as workshops and other diversity activities at larger conferences including those at ACA and APA.

Classes: Classes on diversity were available from the university. In addition the department has offered a course on working with people with disabilities. Courses taken outside the department were approved for credit, thus reducing the courseload burden of students interested in these courses.

Assistantships: Some assistantships offer the opportunity to obtain supervision experiences with individuals committed to multicultural issues.

Research: Some opportunities to do multicultural research exist through class projects or within departmental courses. Some research groups led by faculty are exploring multicultural issues.

PEER SUPPORT: Students supported each other by sharing information and resources about workshops and conferences and classes, as well as providing emotional support and networking connections.

RID/CC: Described in section 2.

FRIDAY FORUMS: A joint effort of faculty and students to provide space for students and faculty to informally discuss topics of interest, one to two times a month on Friday afternoons. Students' growth experiences resulted in their collaboration with faculty to present diversity issues at these meetings. The department's efforts to expand the Friday Forum format into a two day diversity program were delayed due to funding. In the tradition of many cultures which have rendered quality productions with limited resources, the students decided to launch a low budget version of the program. The program (which became the Diversity Program described in section 3) developed into a week long conference.

DIVERSITY PROGRAM: Described in section 3.

SECTION 2
CULTURAL COMPETENCE AND RACIAL IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT

CULTURAL COMPETENCE

Cross et al (1989) define culture as implying "the integrated pattern of human behavior that includes thoughts, communications, actions, customs, beliefs, values and institutions of a racial, ethnic, religious or social group." They describe cultural competence as "a set of congruent behaviors, attitudes and policies that come together in a system, agency or among professionals and enable that system, agency, or those professionals to work effectively in cross-cultural situations."

Their developmental tasks for moving toward a culturally competent system of care can be applied to individual professionals as well as to systems. The goal, then, is an individual who acknowledges and incorporates the importance of culture, assesses cross-cultural interactions and dynamics and increases her or his knowledge and skills to meet "culturally unique" needs.

Cultural competence is viewed as a goal and the process is seen as developmental. To Cross, et al., (1989), the concept suggests the following continuum:

Reference Points			Developmental Stages		
Cultural Destructiveness	Cultural Incapacity	Cultural Blindness	Cultural Pre-Competence	Cultural Competence	Cultural Proficiency

The culturally destructive through culturally blind positions on the continuum are not seen as goal, rather they are reference points for assessment. The three remaining points on the continuum are seen as developmental stages. Keeping this in mind, characteristics of the three reference points are given below, followed by the developmental tasks for the three developmental stages.

Cultural destructiveness:

- Active participation in cultural genocide
- Dehumanize or subhumanize minority clients

- Assumption that one race is superior and should eradicate lesser cultures because of their perceived subhuman position

Cultural Incapacity

- Still believes in the superiority of the dominant group
- Discriminates on the basis of whether people of color "know their place"
- Often characterized by ignorance and unrealistic fear of people of color
- May support segregation as a desirable policy

Cultural Blindness

- Philosophy of being unbiased
- Color or culture makes no difference
- All people are essentially the same and should be treated equally; therefore helping approaches are universally applicable

Cultural Pre-Competence:

- Realize weaknesses in serving multicultural populations
- Explore how to reach people of color
- Conduct needs assessments concerning minority populations

Cultural competence:

- Acceptance and respect for differences
- continuing self-assessment of interactions and dynamics of difference
- adaptation to meet the needs of multicultural populations

Cultural Proficiency:

- Hold cultures in high esteem
- Add to knowledge base of culturally competent practice by conducting research, developing therapeutic approaches based on culture, publishing and disseminating results of demonstration projects.

RACIAL IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT

BLACK RACIAL IDENTITY (CROSS, 1971)

Helms (1986) amended Cross's model (1971) and suggested than an individual's stage or world view was the result of his or her cognitive maturation level in interaction with societal forces.

Stage 1- Preencounter Stage

-Idealization of the dominant white world view and denigration of the Black world view.

-Abandoning Blacks as a reference group and accepting Whites as such, and denying one's ascribed Black identity.

-One believes that race and racial indoctrination have nothing to do with how he/she lives and continue to believe that social mobility is determined primarily by individual personal ability and effort.

-This can take place in an active or passive way.

A) Active- The person deliberately idealizes Whiteness and denigrates Blacks and Black through

behaviors and attitudes.

B) Passive- Individuals believe that personal effort guarantees "passage" into white culture. Such individuals lead their lives in ways that they think will earn them acceptance by Whites.

Stage 2- Encounter Stage

-One can no longer deny the reality that he/she cannot become an accepted part of "the White world".

A) Events An event/events draw attention to racism and one's race.

B) Experience A feeling of dissonance which propels one to the next stage.

Stage 3-Immersion/Emersion

Immersion-

-In this stage one psychologically and physically (if possible) withdraws into Blackness and a Black world.

-Generalized anger (at Whites, at self, at some Blacks) appears to characterize immersion.

-One typically idealizes Blackness and African heritage, but denigrates White and White Western heritage.

-Catharsis occurs which allows one to transition into emersion.

Emersion-

-A possible transition out of Immersion.

-The Emersion phase allows the person to develop a positive non stereotypic Afro-American world perspective.

-Anger levels off as a result of catharsis.

-One sorts out strengths and weaknesses of Black culture and of being Black

Stage 4 Internalization-

-The primary change that occurs during this stage is a cognitive one.

-Internalization of a positive personally relevant Black identity. The person approaches the world from a position of personal strength and thus can re negotiate one's positions with respect to Whites and White society.

-One can re-establish relationships with Whites who merit such relationships and can analyze the strengths and weaknesses of Whiteness and White culture.

-Others are judged not by group membership, but by their personhood.

Internalization/Commitment -

-A second mode of the internalization stage which includes more of the behavioral change aspects.

-Participation in social and political activities designed to eliminate racism and/or oppression, regardless of the race of perpetrators or victims.

-One allows others to "be" as long as doing so does not encourage oppression and victimization.

CORRESPONDENCES BETWEEN BRI AND CC

Preencounter Stage of BRI involves valuing of the dominant culture, suggesting a culturally incapacitated perspective.

Encounter Stage of BRI involves a recognition of differences which implies the culturally precompetent stage.

Immersion/Emersion Stage of BRI corresponds to the culturally incapacitated stage.

Internalization Stage of BRI corresponds to the culturally competent and/or proficient stage, which includes recognizing and accepting differences, as well as becoming a change agent.

ANECDOTAL ILLUSTRATIONS:

Reactions/behavior of a doctoral student in a clinical or counseling program as she or he experiences each of the stages of Black Racial Identity Development (BRID).

Pre-encounter: An African American student is convinced that opportunities at any level in the educational system are based on merit, not skin color. She/he is convinced that the educational system provides the best opportunity for any individual to move up in the opportunity structure.

Encounter: The student realizes that she/he is being given preferential treatment: instructors give her/him low (or high) grades regardless of her/his performance. She/he realizes that some instructors are grading on the basis of their beliefs about Blacks. She/he is also beginning to realize that much of the research that established psychology and its principles was based on studies that did not incorporate or acknowledge the presence of Blacks. Her/his confusion leads her/him to question the feasibility of psychology as a career.

Inmersion/Emersion: The student attends a counseling conference where the dominant theme is multicultural counseling. She/he also attends a conference whose specific focus is cross-cultural counseling. She/he begins to read the ABPsi (Association of Black Psychologists) journal and other works by Black psychologists. The student becomes an advocate for diversity issues in her/his department. Note, however, that her/his efforts are mainly directed at improving conditions for Blacks. She/he finds mentors and peer supporters who direct her/him to more sources of information.

Internalization: The student organizes a diversity conference. She/he discovers, through this and her/his networking with others interested in diversity, that oppression exists in many forms. She/he is becoming more comfortable with her/his identity as an African American and recognizes that there are other people for whom the salience of identity or belonging to a reference group is a key part of their development.

WHITE RACIAL IDENTITY (HELMS, 1993)

The greater the extent that racism exists and is denied, the less possible it is to develop a positive White identity. A sense of entitlement among Whites is the norm in the USA. As long as one's skin is white, regardless of individual resources, one is entitled to feel superior to Blacks. This entitlement often does not become an issue for Whites until Whites come in contact with the idea of Blacks (or other visible racial/ethnic groups). Thus, the issue of White racial identity usually does not become an issue until Whites come in contact with Blacks. According to Helms (1993), the development of a healthy white

identity requires the abandonment of individual racism as well as the recognition of and active opposition to institutional and cultural racism. At the same time, the person must become aware of his or her own Whiteness, learn to accept Whiteness as an important part of herself or himself, and to internalize a realistically positive view of what it means to be White.

Phase 1

Contact Stage-

-One encounters the idea or the actuality of Black people.
-One has not had to confront moral dilemmas resulting from being identified as a racist.
-One evaluates Blacks according to White criteria automatically, without awareness that there are other possible criteria, and without awareness that he or she could legitimately be evaluated according to other racial/cultural groups' criteria.
-Limited social or occupational interaction with Blacks.
-The White person uses the Black person as a source of information about Black people and often evaluates the Black person against societal stereotypes of Blacks.

Disintegration Stage-

-Entry implies conscious but conflicted acknowledgment of one's Whiteness.
-Moral dilemmas associated with being White are recognized (i.e., the desire to be religious or moral versus the recognition that to be accepted by the White majority one must treat blacks immorally; the belief in freedom and democracy versus the belief in racial inequality)(Dennis, 1981).
-One questions the racial realities the person has been taught to believe and may feel caught between two racial groups.

Reintegration Stage-

-One consciously acknowledges a White identity and accepts the belief in White racial superiority and Black inferiority.
-Institutional and cultural racism are seen as the White person's due because he/she has earned these privileges.
-Cross-racial similarities are minimized and/or denied. Any feelings of guilt or anxiety (aroused during Disintegration) are transformed into fear of and anger toward Black people.
Behavior characteristic of this stage may be either active or passive.

A) Active behavior includes treating blacks as inferior, racial jokes, or acts of violence designed to protect White privilege.

B) Passive behavior includes deliberately removing oneself from and/or avoiding situations or environments in which one might encounter Black people.

Phase 2

Pseudo-Independent Stage-

-This is the first stage in developing a positive White identity.

-One begins to actively question the belief that Blacks are innately inferior to Whites and begins to acknowledge Whites' responsibility for racism.
-One experiences discomfort with a racist identity and begins searching for ways to redefine his or her White identity in a non-racist way.
-This stage is characterized by intellectualization and denial of feelings about Whiteness aroused in previous stages.
-One does not recognize that White criteria for success may be inappropriate or too narrowly defined for individuals from various cultural backgrounds.
-Efforts are aimed towards helping Blacks rather than changing Whites.
-One may feel uncomfortable both with his or her White identity as well as with his or her relation to Blacks.
-If rewards are great enough, one will begin a quest for identifying and valuing positive aspects of Whiteness that are unrelated to racism, which signals the person's entry into the Immersion/Emersion stage.

Immersion/Emersion-

-Replacing myths and stereotypes with accurate information about what it means to be White.
-One searches for information in order to replace myths with accurate info.
-Changing Black people is no longer the focus of energy and activities; the goal of changing oneself, developing a healthier White identity, and changing other White people becomes salient. -Emotional catharsis occurs where one reexperiences previous emotions that were denied or distorted.

Autonomy-

-This stage involves an "awareness of personal responsibility for racism, consistent acknowledgment of one's Whiteness, and abandonment of racism in any of its forms as a defining aspect of one's personality" (Helms, 1993, p.53).
-One holds a pluralistic racial world view and recognizes racism as a White problem. Primary activities of this stage include
-One internalizes, nurtures, and applies the new definition of Whiteness which has evolved out of the earlier stages.
-Group membership characteristics such as race are no longer the salient factor used in deciding how to treat (or mistreat) people, because race is nor longer threatening.
-One seeks out opportunities to learn from other cultural groups, becomes increasingly aware of other forms of oppression, and acts to eliminate those forms of oppression as well.

CORRESPONDENCES BETWEEN WRID AND CC

Contact: Acknowledging issues of race is felt to be irrelevant. Behavior could reflect either a culturally incapacitated or blind position depending on the reason one desires to avoid the topic of race, e.g., races other than those who formed the dominant culture have a deficit (incapacitated) or it's impolite because we should treat everybody equally (blind)

Disintegration: Differences are noticed/acknowledged, however there is confusion. Corresponds to culturally pre-competent, however, one could be involved in there activities for the "wrong reasons" i.e.,m political correctness.

Reintegration: Valuing of one's culture over others corresponds with culturally incapacitated. A movement backward in the Cross et. al. (1989) model, suggesting the ability to move back and forth between stages in one's behavior.

Pseudo-independent: wanting to help people of other cultures "adapt" to one's culture suggests culturally incapacitated behavior.

Immersion/Emersion: A desire to form a pluralistic society suggests that one would engage in culturally competent behavior.

Autonomy: desire to be part of the solution suggests culturally proficient behavior.

ANECDOTAL ILLUSTRATIONS:

Reactions of a doctoral student in a clinical or counseling program as he or she experiences each of the stages of White Racial Identity Development (WRID).

WRID Contact Stage: In prepracticum class, a student wonders why they would address racial differences in the class or with a client. He/she feels it's impolite and irrelevant. Race doesn't matter because a psychologist is there to help everyone, regardless of race.

WRID Disintegration Stage: During practicum, a student notices that his/her colleagues treat Black and White clients differently, and feels guilty and confused. Also begins to realize that theories apply differently to Black and White clients, but doesn't understand why, or what to do about it.

WRID Reintegration Stage: The student distorts environmental information to conform to the White superiority principle (i.e., he/she decides that theories apply to all clients equally as well, but Blacks are just "less positive" than Whites, so therefore do not "measure up" as compared to Whites or as assessed via White theoretical models). The student believes that White theories reflect the way things "should be" in the USA. Blacks should be measured by White standards. Another belief: Whites do better on IQ tests because Blacks do not try hard enough and do not have sufficient intellectual abilities or skills.

WRID Pseudo Independent Stage: The student realizes that Blacks are not innately inferior to Whites (i.e., i.e., in terms of moral development, emotional development, intelligence), so he or she begins to use the environment from which they originate to explain why people of color have not achieved the same economic, educational, social levels as Whites. This student feels a responsibility to help people of color to become more like Whites/adapt to the White dominant culture in the USA. This student puts forth much energy to help Blacks learn how they should think, feel, behave in order to be accepted by White society.

WRID Immersion/Emersion Stage: The student begins to realize that Blacks need not change to fit better into White society, but rather White society needs to change to be a pluralistic society which welcomes the strengths and diversity of Blacks and Whites. He/she realizes that the way psychologists interact with (i.e., counsel, test) individuals needs to be changed so that the interactions will be beneficial to all clients. He/she feels angry that more attention is not paid to this reality in graduate school, in psychology, and in

CONCLUSION

Our cultural competence is developing as a result of working on personal and professional diversity issues and receiving support, as well as learning by attending conferences and workshops. If not for a recognition of the implications and salience of race and oppression through their own experience and development, it seems unlikely that they would have developed an interest, much less skills, in cultural competence.

We believe that if we develop norms for cultural competence and mandate activities designed to bring people to the same level of competence, this may be restrictive for individuals whose developmental level is different, or whose goals reflect their perception of diversity and not that of the training program. Our diversity program reflects these beliefs by allowing individuals to participate at all levels, from organizing, to presenting, to showing up to watch a film.

What we have presented is our perception of our own and others' development and how we feel theories of RID and CC contribute to understanding the process. We invite researchers to conduct empirical study of the ideas presented in our paper.

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